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DISCUSSION OF THE PAPER BY PROFESSOR FREDERICK J. TURNER," "IS SECTIONALISM IN AMERICA DYING AWAY?"

(PRINTED IN THE MARCH ISSUE OF THIS JOURNAL)

PROFESSOR FRANK W. BLACKMAR, UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

No criticism could be safely made upon Professor Turner's paper so far as his historical résumé of the shifting of political sectionalism is concerned. Yet he fails from a sociological standpoint to give an adequate solution of the question as a present-day problem. The speaker failed, I think, to give sufficient importance to transportation and commerce, and to unified economic interests as destroyers or preventives of sectionalism. Nor was he careful enough to trace the fierce political sectionalism of the past to final economic causes. That the contests of states for supremacy are dying out is true, but the obliteration of state lines is not an assurance of the growth of sectionalism for the same forces that destroy state lines will eventually destroy sectional lines.

Sectionalism is only an expression of race morality, a question of preserving a group with common interests. As such it is a mode of normal social progress and hence in a way can never die out. It is a method of balancing of social forces in a great nation in an attempt to establish community of justice.

As the people of different sections understand one another through the diffusion of knowledge and as their economic and political interests become more common, sectionalism gradually disappears. In the United States sectionalism born of political prejudice is gradually disappearing as better socialization takes place. As the nation becomes more homogeneous in economic development there is less reason for economic sectionalism as a means of self-defense. As an illustration, prior to 1870 less than 3 per cent. of the cotton manufacture was south of Mason and Dixon's line. Now, over 50 per cent. of the cotton manufacture is in this section. Prior to 1870 the South presented an unbroken front on the protective tariff. Now many sections of the South are more radically in favor of the protective tariff than New England. Likewise the farmers of California are more radically in favor of the tariff since the fruit industry needs it.

That sectionalism is a balancing of forces is observed in the Reclamation Act which provides for the irrigation of arid lands. As this section is being favored by the use of public funds, a measure will be introduced in Congress to favor the Mississippi Valley and the Atlantic coast by redeeming swamp lands. If one section of the nation may be helped in one way

it is assurance that another section may be helped in a similar way or in some other way. Sectionalism of this nature will never die out. It is merely a method of self-preservation, and the promotion of economic and political justice.

But that sectionalism born of prejudice and local pride is dying out is evident from more complete processes of socialization. The extension of railways, the diffusion of knowledge through universal education, the unification of religious thought, the rise of the telephone and the rural mail delivery, and the development of common interests make a more homogeneous nation, and cause mere sectional interests to decline.

The more complex society becomes the more one section is dependent upon the other. What helps one section helps directly or indirectly another. Our commercial life is an illustration of this. As people know and feel this, sectionalism gradually dies out. But in this process there is a continual shifting of scenes as one cause for sectional interest passes away and a new form appears. Thus the appearance of the Japanese on the Pacific coast brings new questions to that particular section and the people of that section will defend their interests, regardless to a certain extent of larger national interests. This in time will be adjusted and become a purely national question as the race problem in the South has become.

PROFESSOR FREDERICK W. MOORE, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

In default of having Professor Turner's paper to read I went to the dictionary to find something on sectionalism, and I speak of it here because I found something which rather surprised me. In the *Century Dictionary* I found the definition of sectionalism as it has been treated here this afternoon, as the sectional prejudice growing out of differences in interests, more especially in political interests. But I also found the initials "U. S." at the end of the definition. It is strictly an American usage, then, the dictionary being our authority. "Particularism" is perhaps a German word, "sectionalism" an American word.

I would devote a few minutes to another point that may be worth considering; and in introducing it I am reminded of a conversation to which I listened recently with interest between some Tennessee and Kentucky friends of mine on the subject of the different brands of whiskey which are produced in their respective states. One spoke with a good deal of positiveness about the constituent elements of whisky, and of the presence in large quantity of one particular element in certain brands. The element which was discussed was fusel oil; and it turned out that the maximum in any brand was 3 per cent. and the minimum perhaps 1 per cent. And yet with all positiveness it was asserted that the amount was tremendously great in some brands as compared with others.

Now I would apply it to our discussion in this way. Our American life is made up of a great many elements. This one we are discussing, sectionalism, is certainly one of them; I think, however, it is one which, compared with the number and value of the others, is of small importance and should not be looked upon as having too large a part in the making of our history. Yet if we will not overvalue it we may certainly neglect for the purposes of the occasion the other things and devote ourselves to a very full and careful study of it, forgetting for a moment that there is anything else which needs discussion.

Turning, therefore, to the intensive study of sectionalism, we may surely agree with the speaker that it is a subject of importance, and one out of the study of which very much may be gained. This is the day of intensive study in our institutions of higher learning, especially in advanced classes. They are looking for topics for research. The general problems have all been canvassed; and we are coming to the smaller ones—and not without profit, I am sure. Sectionalism, as it has been outlined by the speaker, affords, I think, a very fine field for many special studies.

I would venture to suggest one form of sectionalism that has not been mentioned and yet is worth investigating and discussing—perhaps a rather elusive one to study, a psychological influence. I can illustrate it from the history of Tennessee.

Like all Gaul, that state is divided into three parts; and we who live there cannot forget it, cannot become unconscious of it. To say that a meeting was held in Nashville is to suggest *per contra* that it was not held either in Knoxville or in Memphis; and if western Tennessee has an insane asylum provided by the state, middle and eastern Tennessee are bound to have insane asylums too. There are physiographic and other reasons for the divisions of the state, but I venture to say that the physiographic or other historical reasons that may have once caused the division would not have perpetuated it so long were it not for the persistence of this acquired attitude of mind. The Baptists of the state cannot hold a convention in eastern Tennessee without planning that within the next two years western Tennessee and middle Tennessee shall be visited. Thus the effect continues long after the causes that produced it have lost their significance.

There is opportunity for the intensive study of sectionalism surely; yet it might prove too much. You might carry it too far and make too much of antagonisms between sections too small to affect the nation at large. That triple division of the state of Tennessee is an instance in point. Other localities furnish similar instances; and I would raise the question, therefore, whether there would not be danger of going too far in defining the sectional divisions; danger of proving too much and of neutralizing the value of those sectional differences that are really worth considering.

Again, the influence of sectional majorities on the general policy of the

government might be studied. I will illustrate this by conditions in our Tennessee counties, which are governed by county courts with considerable power, particularly in the matter of roads, education, and the like. The membership of the court is made up of justices elected by the districts. Now in many counties the division into districts is not according to population. The result is that the majority of the population does not always elect the majority in the court, particularly where some districts include towns and villages and others are sparsely populated. In such counties it often occurs that the country districts, having a majority of the court, refuse to move in the direction of larger appropriations for improved roads and schools as fast as the more densely populated sections of the county would like to go. Contrariwise, if the majority of the people of that county, composed of those in the more densely populated districts of the county, controls these two civilizing forces, good roads and better educational facilities, are forced upon the whole county, doubtless with good results. There is suggested on the one hand the retarding influence of sectionalism, and in the contrary case the forcing of these agencies of progress more quickly into the backward parts of the county, when those parts which are in favor of them have the advantage.

If therefore on the one hand intensive study of conditions will bring to light many an instance of sectional antagonism, we may on the other note how many influences there are already existing which tend to reduce sectionalism within a rather narrow range—important within its own range, yet by these influences confined to a relatively small area. The progress of the frontier westward, the advance of the settler, the merchant, the manufacturer, the development of transportation facilities, all of these carry with them the diminishing of sectionalism. To these attention has been called. The diminishing in some respects of political antagonism has been referred to. We certainly can get a very interesting basis of comparison in Professor Turner's contrast between the map of Europe and the map of the United States when we consider how Europe has been crystallized into countries so different in stock, in language, and in political and social ways, and then see how the growing-up of such a sectionalism has been prevented here—a certainly remarkable contrast.

I am inclined to think that some of the features of our governmental system, which perhaps are not as much spoken of as they once were, have done a good deal to diminish sectionalism. I refer to the fact that our national government, strongly as it exercises the powers which belong to it, is, however, confined to the exercise of a few functions and that a very large degree of liberty is allowed to the sections within their state boundaries.

In the matter of the negro I can illustrate, I think. If the Fifteenth Amendment were applied as it was evidently intended it should be applied to force the suffrage into the hands of the negro, there certainly would be a

greater degree of antagonism between the section to which the negro population is so largely confined and the other sections of the country; but fortunately it has been recognized that, while the suffrage may not be withheld for the reasons alleged or stated in the Fifteenth Amendment, other reasons may be assigned which are not covered by the constitution; and when these reasons are made the occasion of state laws they are allowed to stand although they limit the suffrage. In the matter of federal elections the same tendency of the government to leave the localities in control is manifest.

I have looked with some anxiety upon various phases that Mongolian immigration has presented in the West. I look with anxiety at the rising of a racial problem there, and yet I have one melancholy satisfaction in connection with it. We are coming to recognize racial, ethnic antagonisms; and for something of that sort to manifest itself in another section of the country than the South where it has so long been manifested, is to take away from the southern problem the intensity of personal feeling that has always gathered about it, and make it less a sectional matter with the people of the South and more a broad matter of sociological import—the competition, the rivalry, the jealousy of races.

In conclusion, may I say just two things: First, we must thank Professor Turner for presenting this subject and calling our attention to this field for intensive study. Yet, secondly, I must declare to you with how much satisfaction I have felt that as a teacher before my classes in history it was entirely possible to draw some lessons from the past antagonism of the sections and to show the passing-away of the occasions for antagonism; to illustrate from our history that a country cannot be strong where the sectional differences are great; and to rejoice that the greatest sectional differences have been passed and are behind us, and that we of this and the coming generations can look forward to the continuing and increasing strength of our national union.

PROFESSOR ISAAC A. LOOS, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

I was interested in noting that Professor Turner seems to have answered the question, "Is Sectionalism Dying Out?" in the negative, and for two reasons: First, on account of the persistence of the old forces; although he has intimated that there are certain forces which were at one time very active that have now become less active, but they have not died out as these maps will show.

And then again, I think that another thought, I surely should not say sentiment, that ran through his paper might be generalized under the proposition that there are certain new forces which we might call new manifestations of the cosmic forces—but we need not stop for any designation of these forces. It needs certainly to be recognized that while some of the older phases of sectionalism are waning or perhaps disappearing, the great forces

are at work, which the historian recognizes because, like the judge, his training is judicial and adjusted to the historical method. He recognizes the factors as he finds them, and as he studies the facts, he finds that there are new forces at work. So as the history of the United States opens up in panoramic view to the historian, there is a suggestion of waning provincialisms of some types while he sees new and rising forms of provincialisms of other types. It seems to me that we could call attention to a very interesting phase of sectionalism by accepting that word "provincialism," as suggested, and then raising the subquestion under our broad topic, "Is sectionalism dying out?" We might ask what "the types of provincialism" are at the present time in process of development and what types of provincialism which have developed long since are continuing through the persistence of forces at work from the beginning of things.

It occurs to me that numerous illustrations might be found, but without taking the time for these I want simply to refer to the considerable number of rather admirable provincial studies which have been made by our writers of fiction. And I want to point to at least one type of provincialism with which I am somewhat familiar—the type of provincialism which formed so long ago—I would call it sectionalism except for the fact that it plays rather a minor rôle, but still is recognized very thoroughly in Professor Turner's paper: the rôle played, for example, by the Pennsylvania Germans in their occupation of a specific portion of the United States and the lines along which they spread in specific occupations. For example, there are not many Germans that become presidents of the Pennsylvania Railway Company. There is a type of stock that furnishes the presidents of the Pennsylvania road. I hardly need refer to them by singling them out. They believe in themselves and their organized clans. There was a time in the history of Pennsylvania when it was necessary to divide those two stocks. There was the colonial act of 1748 in which it was decreed in effect that the Germans and the Scotch must keep apart. Today of course they intermarry. But the two stocks, it could be shown through statistical examination, persist along definite lines in religion, in industry, and in social habits, in the most interesting way, illustrating in a broad way the theme of Professor Turner, confirming his conclusion as he stated it, although he did not put it in any very formal manner. It is only recently that these interesting people have attracted the attention of the novelist, but those who are acquainted with *Tillie and Other Sketches* know that there is an admirable field here and that it has been subjected to cultivation in some measure.

Curiously enough, in Professor Turner's maps, for example, the Germans go with the plains and the Republicans, but I dare say there are many here who know that in the heart of the section we have in mind they still vote for Andrew Jackson.

They do that because, in the first place, they were tories; and they were

tories because the English king befriended them when they were despoiled Protestants.

I agree so thoroughly with the paper that I am sure I do not need to discuss it further.

PROFESSOR J. ALLEN SMITH, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

It was my misfortune not to be able to hear all of Professor Turner's paper, and for that reason I do not feel competent to discuss it.

I come from the section of the country with reference to which a new form of sectionalism was mentioned, namely the race question brought in by the Japanese. It is my personal opinion (and I have been there for the past ten years), that this is as intensely national in its spirit as any part of the country. I don't think there is any sectionalism whatever out there as it was formerly understood. There is not a person who does not think of the nation first and the state afterward, and it seems to me that these newer states which have just recently been formed have been set up under the influence of the national ideas of government.

But the Japanese question is one I want to say a word or two about. There are a good many who have looked at the matter seriously and think that the West is really menaced by the race question. In fact, I could mention a magazine that is published in English in Seattle by a Japanese, in which he expresses the feeling that the Japanese will ultimately overrun the western states. That is the feeling of many of the Japanese today. If the bars were thrown down and the orientals freely admitted, I have no doubt the West would be confronted by the same problem which is confronting the South today, and that is one reason why we are objecting to the free admission of Japanese, Chinese, or any oriental nationality whatever. I would not say however that the opposition to oriental immigration is wholly due to the fear of a race problem; I think the main reason is what Professor Turner alluded to in his paper, economic interest. I think it is the fear that the Japanese, the Chinese, and the Hindus, if they were freely admitted, would become a potent factor in competition with the white man. It thus comes back to the economic basis referred to.

Another matter which was mentioned, and in regard to which I should like to offer just a word, is the opposition between the state and the country at large. Now I think it is true, as Professor Turner suggests, that there is a certain opposition of interests between different localities and the country as a whole, and it seems that it is inevitable in a country as large as this. But he described very clearly the tendencies which are making toward harmony. The West is developing its manufacturing interests today, becoming a mining country, and of course we have aspirations in the direction of commerce, so that our interests have become very much like those of the East. I think if you would examine our attitude toward national policy you would find that

we are in line with other states similarly situated, so that this development all over the country is doing away with that old narrow localism, and is creating interests that are practically national. There must perhaps be local interests which do not harmonize with the interests of the country at large, and I think we have recognized that principle in our federal form of government. We are conceding more and more to the federal government—for example, the control of railroads, of trusts, and so forth. We admit that the expansion of federal authority has been made necessary by recent industrial development. At the same time considerable freedom must be given to the various states to regulate their own affairs. If this is sectionalism, I suppose that this sort of sectionalism exists in the West and we must have it for a long time to come.

PROFESSOR ULRICH B. PHILLIPS, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

I wish to make one slight criticism of the paper; namely, that in speaking of the development of the southern Piedmont, Dr. Turner says slavery was carried into the interior. Nearly all other Americans would make the same statement; yet it is inexact and misleading.

Slavery already existed by law in the uplands before the cotton industry developed, and what was carried thither by the cotton industry was negro labor. Slavery was merely the legal system adjusting the industrial and social classes to one another. It was the carriage of the negro, rather than of slavery, which assimilated the social constitution and the public opinion and policy of the uplands to that already developed on the coast. Similar problems led to similar adjustments and to similar policies and opinions. And the fundamental problem was not that of the law (slavery) but that of racial adjustment (white men and negroes). A great deal of misleading interpretation of the history of the South and of the United States has occurred through the overemphasis of slavery and the underemphasis of the negro and the plantation system. This criticism is of course very slight. With the paper otherwise, I am in hearty accord.

Let me say, further, that I am even more of the opinion than Dr. Turner, and certainly more than the other speakers, that sectionalism is an essentially permanent thing and is likely to be as important in the future as it has been in the past. The function of government, particularly in a republic, is to adjust the people to their environment and the groups of people to one another. The function of politics is to readjust that relation as need arises. Different local groups live under different industrial and social conditions, and need differing governmental activities for the settling of their local or sectional problems. When district interests conflict, contests must ensue for controlling the policy of the common government. Instances of this are constantly recurring; and sectionalism of some sort is a chronic thing. Sectionalism, however, is sometimes petty and sometimes on a grand scale; sometimes

normal and wholesome, and sometimes acute, exaggerated, and dangerous to the nation's welfare. To realize that moderate sectionalism in policy need not be at all unpatriotic, and that its possible menace lies only in its excess, would be to steer clear of some pitfalls which have not been entirely avoided by all of those who have preceded me in discussing the paper of the session.

MISS JULIA A. FLISCH, MADISON, WISCONSIN

I came up here really out of curiosity to see what could be said on a subject that seemed to me a matter of course. The terms used by the various speakers seem somewhat indefinite. Some use the word "nationalism;" others, "sectionalism," between which there are shades of difference. Professor Smith's term solidarity is, I think, a better one.

Is sectionalism dying out? I do not think there is any doubt but that it is; whether it will ever die out entirely is another matter. Professor Turner has developed this subject along the lines of trade, commerce, etc., but there are many other lines. There is a social influence which must be taken into account. I come from a section where I suppose sectional feeling has always been particularly strong. Yet in the college where I taught there are teachers from different parts of the country who meet on terms of equality. Twenty years ago that would not have been possible. In the lines of religion, of society, and of literature, sectionalism is dying out. We are becoming more uniform in dress, in speech, and in social customs. I feel sure we may say sectionalism is dying out. That it will ever die completely I doubt; and for my part I should be sorry if it did. If we are to be uniform in dress, in education, in words, in thoughts, and in ideas, life would become so monotonous that the only interesting thing left for us to do would be to die.